DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 393 803 SP 036 542

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TITLE The Implementation of Effective Teaching Practices in English Classroom for Grades 8th, 9th, and 10th.
PUB DATE Oct 95
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the National Convention for Educational Development (1st, Irbid, Jordan, October 1995).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Practices; *English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; Grade 8; Grade 9; Grade 10; Instructional Effectiveness; Predictor Variables; Program Implementation; Secondary Education; Secondary School Teachers; *Second Language Instruction; Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Behavior; *Teacher Effectiveness
IDENTIFIERS *Jordan

ABSTRACT

This study explored teachers' behavior as related to effective teaching practices in 8th, 9th, and 10th grade English classrooms in Jordan. The study also examined some variables that could predict teachers' implementation of effective teaching practices and aimed at finding an estimate of the percentage of students in 8th, 9th, and 10th grades who had problems related to English competency. A total of 152 teachers from 3 districts were asked to respond to questionnaire items, and of these, 148 participated. The results revealed that many teachers who participated in this study were aware of the overall effective teaching practices but did not use some elements of effective teaching in their classrooms. Also, this study revealed that the only variable that predicted teachers' implementation of effective teaching practices in their classrooms was the total time during which they spoke English. Finally, this study revealed from teachers' responses that a large number of students had problems with English competency. Recommendations and suggestions for future research are discussed. Contains 5 tables and 13 references. (Author/JB)

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The Implementation of Effective Teaching Practices in English Classroom for Grades 8th, 9th, and 10th

ED 393 803

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October, 1995

Paper Presented at the First National Convention for Educational Development, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan

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RUNNING HEAD: EFFECTIVE TEACHING

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' behavior as related to effective teaching practices in 8th, 9th, and 10th grades English classrooms. This study also examined some variables that could predict teachers' implementation of effective teaching practices, and aimed at finding an estimate of the percentage of students in 8th, 9th, and 10th grades who had problems related to English competency. The results revealed that many teachers who participated in this study were aware of the overall effective teaching practices but did not use some elements of effective teaching in their classrooms. Also, this study revealed that the only variable that predicted teachers' implementation of effective teaching practices in their classrooms was the total time during which they speak English. Finally, this study revealed from teachers' responses that there was a large number of students who had problems with English competency. Recommendations and suggestions for future research are discussed.

In addition to helping students remember what is taught in the classroom or even in life's daily interactions, effective instruction implies teaching students how to remember what is presented during the learning process (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986). Teaching students how to learn requires students to actively use many learning strategies. Some of these strategies are rehearsing (e.g., repetitions), elaboration (mental imagery and paraphrasing), organization (forming groups and hierarchies), comprehension monitoring (self-questioning) (Mayer, 1987; Weinstein & Mayer, 1986), and anxiety reduction (studying in a quiet place) (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986). Pressley, Johnson, and Symons (1987) mentioned that strategies such as questioning, imagery generation, using a keyword mnemonic method, and accompanying the verbal material with pictures seemed to improve learning. Another form of strategies is to generate relations among the components of the material to be learned and between the material and the learners' knowledge base and experience. Wittrock (1986) presents a review on learning and memory, comprehension and knowledge acquisition.

The effect of using such strategies in the learning processes of students with and without mild disabilities evolved from research on the cognitive approach to human information processing, especially research on human memory (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968). One important finding concerning human memory was advanced by Miller (1956) who noted that conscious and active human memory, often referred to as short-term or working memory, is limited in its capacity. Therefore, an effective strategy would require that tasks demanding a heavy memory load should be broken into small and simple steps.

The use of learning strategies such as chunking is thought to free some memory resources allowing them to focus on other aspects of the learning

task. Research dealing with learning strategies and life experiences has been shown to facilitate learning in domain specific fields. For example, improvement may be seen in reading but not in numerals (Mayer, 1987).

After reviewing the literature about learning strategies and cognitive development in children, Mayer (1987) concluded that three stages exist for the emergence of learning strategies such as rehearsal, organization, and elaboration. In the first stage, strategies are not spontaneously used. In the second or transitional stage, children may have learning strategies but do not use them spontaneously to improve learning. In the third stage, learning strategies are available and used spontaneously. Mayer indicated that the nature of the task and characteristics of the children affect the movement through these stages. He felt that tasks to be learned should be matched to the appropriate stage.

It would seem that effective teaching practices would match the learning task to the learning strategy stage of the learner (Mayer, 1987), present new information in small steps due to the limited processing capacity of short-term memory (Miller, 1956), and provide practice (Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986) before introducing new information or increasing the complexity of the task. This procedure could provide access to prior learning and prerequisite skills which, according to Rosenshine and Stevens (1986), would free memory resources to learn new tasks. Also, Rosenshine and Stevens noted that previewing the lesson, stating what is to be learned and relating it to previously covered materials, and providing lesson outlines all help students understand new material.

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' behavior as related to effective teaching practices mentioned in the literature in 8th, 9th, and 10th grades English classrooms. This study also examined some variables that

could predict teachers' implementation of effective teaching practices. These variables were the total time during which teachers spoke English, teaching experience, the total number of students in grades 8th, 9th, and 10th, education (i.e., academic degree held by teachers), and gender. Finally, this study aimed at finding an estimate of the percentage of students in 8th, 9th, and 10th grades who had problems in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English, and who would fail if not given extra credits.

METHOD

Participants

A total of 152 teachers selected randomly from 3 educational districts (Irbid First Educational District, Irbid Second Educational District, and Ramtha Educational District) in Irbid Governorate, who served students in 8th, 9th, and 10th grades, participated in this study. Of the 152 teachers, 148 of them (91 males with a mean age of 38-4 and a standard deviation of 6.65 years and 57 females with a mean age of 34-9 and a standard deviation of 6.03 years) were used in this study. Those who did not participate (i.e., 4 teachers) did so due to loosing their questionnaires in the process of data collection.

Teachers were asked to respond to questionnaire items by filling in some data and selecting the appropriate response to statements on a 4-point likert type scale.

Instrumentation

The items included in the questionnaire were gathered from the literature on effective teaching (Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986; Brophy & Good, 1986), some professionals in education, and our own personal experience with issues that affect the instructional process.

In their review of the literature, Rosenshine and Stevens (1986) found that there are specific teaching steps which teachers can implement and which, in turn, can increase students' achievement and engagement time in the classroom. These teaching steps were used to formulate a model for teachers' behavior in the classroom. This model was used to form some of the questionnaire items for the current study.

Eighty seven questionnaire items as well as an initial demographic section were constructed for this study. The initial demographic section elicited information such as date of birth, monthly income, education level, marital status, and number of family members. The 87 questionnaire items were divided into two major parts. The first part had two sections covering issues such as years of teaching experience, time in minutes used in teaching and speaking English in each class period, and the total number of students in each grade level as well as the number of students who had problems in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English.

A 4-point likert type scale was used in the second part of the questionnaire. The choices for this part ranged form "Always" which was given the maximum point (i.e., 4 points) to "Never" which was given the minimum point (i.e., 1 point), or from "Excellent" which was given the maximum point (4 points) to "Fair" which was given the minimum point (i.e. 1 point), depending on the section for which these choices fit. This part contains 10 sections (74 items) covering issues such as teaching skills, getting students' attention, acknowledging the right answer, guiding students practice, assigning seat work, reteaching items not answered correctly in the tests, and practicing behavior modifications.

The questionnaire was piloted with 8 professionals in the field of education and was revised for clarity. The reliability measure for the likert-type scale items was a chronbach's alpha coefficient of .87.

RESULTS

Qualitative and quantitative approaches to research in education were both used to report the results of this study. The data were summed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences: Personal Computer (SPSS-PC+).

The percentage of mean performance on all items covering effective teaching practices in part 2 was 79%. This number indicates that many teachers participated in this study were aware of the overall effective teaching practices. The results also indicated major problems that hindered and were counterproductive to implementing effective teaching practices in English classrooms. One of these problems was class load (i.e., students' number in class). Teachers reported (i.e., 83%) that students' large number in classes was a problem in teaching efficiently and achieving lesson objectives. Another problem was students' uncontrollable behavior. Teachers' responses (67%) indicated that students' unmanageable behavior was a major problem in class. Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3 list other problems related to teaching English in grades 8, 9, and 10.

(Insert Table 1)

(Insert Table 2)

(Insert Table 3)

Pearson Product-Moment Correlations were performed on all the variables used in this study: The total score on effective teaching practices, the total time speaking English, teaching experience, the total number of students, education, and gender. As can be seen in table 4, the correlation of the total score on effective teaching practices with the total time speaking English was significant. Also, teaching experience was significantly correlated with education; and education was significantly correlated with gender; these are the only significant correlations found between the six variables.

(Insert Table 4)

Five one-way analyses of variances (ANOVAS) of gender with the total score on effective teaching practices, the total time speaking English, teaching experience, education, and the total number of students were conducted in order to combine men teachers and women teachers into one analysis. The results revealed no gender differences except for education, $F(1, 140)=13.05$, $p<.001$. Men teachers held higher academic degrees more than women teachers. Therefore, special attention was directed toward the "education" and the "gender" variables when entered as predictors of the total score on effective teaching practices in the multiple regression equation.

Simultaneous multiple regression was conducted in which the total score on effective teaching practices was the dependent variable. Variables entered into the equation as predictors were the total time speaking English, teaching experience, the total number of students, education, and gender. The multiple regression equation predicting the total score on effective teaching practices was significant at .05 level. As can be seen in table 5, the total time during

which teachers spoke English was the only variable that accounts for a significant amount of unique variance.

(Insert Table 5)

For comparison purposes the following 3 steps were also taken to validate the result of the regression analysis reported in table 5 (Information about these 3 steps are available on request form the first author):

1. A stepwise multiple regression was performed on the same set of variables. It revealed the same result as the simultaneous multiple regression, which is the total time during which teachers spoke English was the only variable that accounts for a significant amount of unique variance. Hierarchical multiple regression was not performed because there was no theoretical rationale for the ordering of the independent variables used in this study.

2. Since there was a moderate correlation between the "GENDER" variable and the "EDUCATION" variable that might have influenced the outcome of the regression analysis, the "GENDER" variable was removed from the subsequent analysis. The result was similar to the one reported in table 5.

3. Due to the significant difference between women teachers and men teachers on the "EDUCATION" variable, the data file was "split by gender" to find whether or not there were different predictors for women teachers and men teachers. The regression analysis revealed that none of the variables, including the time teachers spent speaking English, was a predictor of the effective teaching practices for women teachers and men teachers when a separate regression analysis was performed.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicated that of the five variables presented, one was demonstrated to account for a significant proportion of the variance in the total score on effective teaching practices in English classrooms. The total time teachers spent speaking English in their classrooms was an important factor in teachers' ability to implement effective teaching practices.

Even though the other four variables were not good predictors of effective teaching practices, there were two significant correlations found between them. As can be seen in Table 4, there was a positive relationship between teaching experience and education (i.e., academic degrees). Experienced teachers were those who had higher academic degrees. This issue may be explained by the initiative taken by the Ministry of Education in 1987 to provide teachers with an opportunity to get higher academic degrees while serving as teachers. However, it is obvious that this opportunity was NOT made accessible OR may not have been used equally by men teachers and women teachers. Men teachers on the average held higher degrees more than women teachers.

It is obvious that the educational system has failed a large number of students as indicated in Table 2. These students have not got the proper assistance and education. Arguing otherwise is like "blaming the victim". Solving this problem is by resolving issues, such as teachers' accountability, class load, students' behavioral problems, the quality of in-service and pre-service training programs, the availability of special education services, encouraging free readings, and seriously supporting English clubs and camps for students and teachers.

Some of the proposed elements which teacher training programs and teaching students should focus on are elaboration and automaticity. Research

on effective teaching practices has indicated that elaboration is needed for effective teaching. Forms of elaboration include activities such as review, overview, correctives, feedback, question-asking and responding, summarization, and redundant instructions and examples. For example, Rosenshine and Stevens (1986) mentioned that elaboration is needed to transfer information from working memory to long-term memory through redundant information during demonstration, guided practice, and explanation of difficult materials. Also, correct responses to teachers' questions, which is a form of elaboration, plays an important part in successful learning.

Weinstein and Mayer (1986), in their review of the literature, stated that elaboration is oriented toward construction (building internal connections between two pieces of information or among several pieces of information in the material that is to be remembered using, for example, mental images and/or keyword strategy) and integration (searching and transferring prior knowledge from long-term memory to working memory, then integrating this knowledge with incoming data). Since many students have problems related to learning, it is particularly critical that elaboration be part of the learning process.

The second element is automaticity. Some research studies used the concept of automaticity to explain why some students experience learning difficulties (e.g., Ackerman & Dykman, 1982; Samuels, 1987; Kolligian & Sternberg, 1987). Using concepts from a sub-theory of intelligence, Sternberg and Wagner (1982) assumed that many learning difficulties result from failing to automatize skills such as reading and mathematics. That is, students with learning disabilities devote much attention to skills which normally achieving individuals have mastered long ago and have now become

automatic. This attention to skills consume the resources which should be used to learn new skills or to advance to higher thinking skills or operations.

Similarly, Samuels (1987) said that one reason for reading difficulty is that the task of decoding written words consumes much attention which, in turn, affects constructing meaning. In order to simultaneously decode and comprehend a given passage, the ability to decode words has to be automatic. Samuels mentioned that one of the characteristics of good readers is the ability to decode and comprehend at the same time during the reading process. However, poor readers use the letter as the unit of recognition in decoding words, which burdens the short-term memory and makes comprehension slow and laborious.

This study suggests that the model proposed by Rosenshine and Stevens (1986) be used in teaching languages to overcome some of the students' learning problems. The participants in this study were aware of some of its elements; but they needed training to appreciate this model and to implement it <u>properly</u> . An indication that many teachers did not implement an important element in the model is that 64% of the teachers revealed that "homework is material not covered in class". When students are given homework that they do not know how to do correctly, what teachers do is basically <u>reinforcing</u> the wrong answer to the homework if the students did the homework wrong. This is obvious from the high percentage of students who had problems related to doing the homework correctly as reported in table 2. Another example that some teachers did not implement some important elements in the model was that 29% of them did not give frequent short tests. Frequent short tests are a good procedure to use to identify as early as possible those students who need help <u>before it is too late.</u> Finally, there was a conflict in the information reported by teachers which is also an

indication that teachers did not implement important elements of the model. If 88% of teachers taught "English materials until mastery level before moving to the next step", how come there was a large number of students who had problems in English competency and who would fail if not given extra credits? At least, teaching activities until mastery ought to reduce the number of students who had problems related to English competency. Otherwise, the element of automaticity was violated.

As mentioned by Rosenshine and Stevens, this model is applicable to well-structured lessons (e.g., teaching facts, vocabulary, grammar, foreign languages, decoding, accounting, and mathematical computations) and is least applicable to lessons in which skills to be taught are not used repeatedly nor do they need teaching specific steps (e.g., problem solving and discussion of social issues). The following are the major elements of the model (Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986, p 379):

1. Review, check previous day's work (and reteach, if necessary)
2. Present new content/skill
3. Guided student practice (and check for understanding)
4. Feedback and correctives (and reteach, if necessary)
5. Independent student practice
6. Weekly and monthly reviews

All teachers implement some elements of this model as noticed in this study, but the most effective teachers use the majority of these elements all the time (Further information about this model is available on request from the first author).

This study also revealed that the time that teachers spent speaking English in class and preparing weekly for instruction is not enough (see Table 1 and Table 3). Teachers should spend more time preparing for their classes and

should increase the time allocated for speaking English (i.e., teaching). This study found that 32% of the class period was spent on activities not related to speaking English (the 32% is an extremely conservative percentage; it could have been higher had direct observation been implemented). Therefore, the focus should be on ways to manipulate the "time" variable to use it more efficiently. For future studies, "time" can be studied, for example, by dividing it into the following segments via direct observation of classroom activities:

1. Allocated time: It refers to the time used for teaching activities in English which are related to the attainment of lesson objectives.
2. Used time: It is the amount of the actual allocated time spent on English teaching activities.
3. Lost time: It is the proportion of the time allocated for teaching English activities, but it was not used toward the completion of those activities due to interruption to the teaching process.
4. Engaged time: It is the time during which students engaged in English activities assigned by teachers by either passively attending to the instructional task with no obvious activities observed or actively attending by interacting with activities related to the instructional task (Hollowood, Salisbury, Rainforth, & Palombaro, 1994).

One variable that might have negatively influenced teachers' willingness and readiness to prepare and teach well (as can be seen in Table 1 and Table 3) could be their socioeconomic status (SES). For example, the results revealed that the average income of the teachers who participated in this study was 211.07 JD (which is about 306 USD), while the average family size supported by those teachers was 5.03 members. Considering inflation and the reduced paying power of the Jordanian currency, teachers' salary is not enough to fulfill their family needs. Therefore, instead of focusing on preparing and

teaching well, teachers might have been preoccupied with their families' financial status and concentrated on ways to earn more money to live decently. More research is needed with regard to this issue.

This study has some limitations. First, the data were collected only from teachers in 3 educational districts in Irbid Governorate. Other regions in Jordan were not represented in this study. Second, this study depended solely on teachers reporting about their classroom activities. A direct observation and a systematic methodology should be used to get accurate information about variables, such as allocated time, lost time, used time, and engaged time. This process will help pinpointing problematic areas and make comparisons between teachers and training programs based on these variables. Third, variables used in the multiple regression analysis were not exhaustive. Future researchers may try to find and include in the multiple regression equation other variables which may contribute unique variance to effective teaching practices. Some of these variables could be teachers' health, locus of control, and anxiety.

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Table 1
Problematic Areas Related to Teachers' Behavior in English Classroom

Problematic Areas	Percentage of Teachers' Mean Responses
Speaking Arabic During the Teaching Process	70%
Speaking Arabic During Feedback and Monitoring	70%
Speaking Arabic During Supervised Practice	69%
Speaking Arabic During Classroom Management	68%
Speaking Arabic During Daily Routine Activities in the Classroom (e.g., Homework)	68%
Speaking Arabic When Giving Assignments	67%
Speaking Arabic when Explaining Items in Tests	66%
Homework is Material not covered in Class	64%

Table 2
Percentage of Students in 8th, 9th, and 10th Grades Who had Problems Related to English Competency

Problematic Areas	Grades		
	8th Grade	9th Grade	10th Grade
Speaking Arabic in English Lesson	49%	42%	39%
Problem in Reading English	41%	42%	37%
Problem in Written English	42%	41%	39%
Problem in Understanding English	41%	38%	38%
Students failing if not given Extra Credits	50%	57%	58%
Problems Doing the Homework Correctly	57%	43%	45%

Note: Students' Total Number in 8th Grade =4191; Students' Total Number in 9th Grade = 3527; Students' Total Number in 10th Grade = 4018.

Table 3
Time Allocations Related to Instruction as Reported By Teachers

Teachers' Behavior	The Average Percentage of Minutes Spent Every Class Period on Classroom Activities	The Average Percentage of Minutes Spent Weekly Preparing for Instruction
Time Spent Speaking English	68%	--
Time Spent Speaking Arabic	19%	--
Time Spent Handling Students' Behavioral Problems	13%	--
Time Spent Weekly Preparing for the 8th Grade	--	1.5%
Time Spent Weekly Preparing for the 9th Grade	--	1.3%
Time Spent Weekly Preparing for the 10th Grade	--	1.7%

Note: Dashes indicate not applicable.

TABLE 4

Pearson Product-Moment Correlations of the Total Score on Effective Teaching Practices (EFFECT TEACH), the Total Time Speaking English (TMSPEG), Teaching Experience (TEACHEXP), the Total Number of Students (STDT NO), Education (EDUCTN) (i.e., Academic Degree Held by Teachers), and Gender for the participants in this study

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. EFFECT TEACH	1.00					
2. TMSPEG	.25**	1.00				
3. TEACHEXP	-.14	-.08	1.00			
4. STDT NO.	-.04	.11	.11	1.00		
5. EDUCTN	-.17	-.09	.16*	.03	1.00	
6. GENDER	-.17	-.13	.14	-.07	.29***	1.00

Note: *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

TABLE 5

Beta weights, multiple R, R square, adjusted R square, t, and overall F value of the simultaneous multiple regression for the Total Score on Effective Teaching Practices estimated from the Total Time Speaking English (TMSPEG), Teaching Experience (TEACHEXP), the Total Number of Students (STDT NO), Education (EDUCTN) (i.e., Academic Degree Held by Teachers), and Gender

Predictor	Beta	t	Multiple R	R Square	Adj.R.Squ.	Overall F
Effective Teaching Practices as the Criterion Variable						
TMSPEG	.251	2.488**				
TEACHEXP	-.079	-.764				
STDT NO.	-.083	-.811				
EDUCTN	-.117	-1.109				
GENDER	-.067	-.606				
Constant		29.200***				
Overall			.341	.116	.068	2.392*

Note: *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001